

A

# *Blow at the Root*

OF THE REFINED

ANTINOMIANISM

Of the present Age.

Wherein that Maxim, which is so absolutely essential to their Scheme, that it cannot subsist without it, laid down by Mr. *Marshall*, viz. That in justifying Faith, "we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it," thoroughly examined: Mr. *Wilson's* Arguments in its Defence, considered and answered; and the whole *Antinomian* Controversy, as it now stands, brought to a short Issue, and rendered plain to the meanest Capacity.

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"Go through, go through the Gates; prepare you the  
"Way of the People, cast up, cast up the High-  
"Way, gather out the Stones, lift up a Standard for  
"the People." ISA. lxii. 10.

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## Advertisement.

**I**N a Piece, entitled, "Letters and Dialogues, upon the Nature of Love to God, Faith in Christ, Assurance of a Title to eternal Life." Printed at Boston New-England. 1759. — Re-printed, London. 1761. — Mr. Marshal's account of justifying Faith, was taken Notice of, viz. That in justifying Faith, "we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it." And twelve Queries were stated on the Point. — To vindicate that whole System of Religion, which is founded in, and results from this kind of Faith, two Volumes were printed in London, 1762. containing about 300 Pages, each: Entitled, Palæmon's Creed reviewed and examined. By David Wilfon. This Author, among other Things, has undertaken to prove, that in justifying Faith, "we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it." — The following Pages are designed as an Answer to this Gentleman, on that Point. — And if that Point, which is essential to their Scheme, and the ROOT of all the Mischief, can be proved to be wrong; their whole Scheme is overthrown. This little Pamphlet then means, to bring to a short Issue, a Controversy which has been the Source of infinite Mischief to the Souls of Mankind.

Bethlem,  
Jan. 14. 1763.



J. Bellamy.

*A Blow at the Root of the re-  
fined Antinomianism of the pre-  
sent Age.*

THE next and immediate Design, of writing  
on controverted Points, is, to assist the  
Reader, by holding forth clear Light, to  
come to a well grounded Judgment, touch-  
ing the Point in Dispute. And to this End,  
we should distinguish between Things that  
differ, state the Point in Dispute, with great exactitude;  
and then present to the Reader, the Arguments on the  
one side and the other, of the Question in Debate,  
and leave him to judge for himself. — And accord-  
ingly, in these Pages, I shall (1.) make some needful  
Distinctions; the not attending to which, has occasioned  
no small Confusion in this Controversy, about the Na-  
ture of justifying Faith. (2.) State the Question now  
to be disputed, with great exactness. (3.) Offer Argu-  
ments against, and (4.) Consider their Arguments in  
Favour of, the Position, which contains the Question in  
Dispute. And then leave every Reader to judge for  
himself. — The Distinctions to be made, are these,

I. THERE is an essential Difference between Justifi-  
cation in the Sight of God, and a persuasion in our own  
Minds, that we are justified. One is the Act of God

our Judge ; the other is the Act of our own Minds ; as is self-evident.— And God's Act must of Necessity be, in order of Nature, at least, before our Act. We must be justified, before we can know that we are justified: For a Thing must exist, before its Existence can be perceived ; to say otherwise, is an exprefs Contradiction.

2. We are justified by Faith alone, and that whether we know our Faith to be of the right Kind, or not : But we are assured of our Justification, by a Consciousness of our Faith, and other Christian Graces, and by knowing they are of the right Kind. We are justified without Respect to any Thing in us, or about us, considered as a recommending Qualification ; simply by *free Grace thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ*. Our Union with Christ, is the Foundation of our Interest in him, his Atonement and Merits ; and so of our Title to Pardon, Justification and eternal Life, according to the Gospel. Faith alone, is that on our Part, whereby we are united to Christ and become one with him, and so that alone, by which we are justified. A Consciousness in our own Minds, that we have true Faith, and those other Christian Graces which are connected with it, and always accompany it, is that alone, by which we can know that we are justified. So that while we are justified simply on the Account of Christ's Righteousness, we can know that we are in Fact justified meerly by a Consciousness of our own inherent Graces ; even as a poor Woman is made rich simply by her Husband's Estate, with whom she becomes one in the Eye of the Law by Marriage : but she knows her Title to her Husband's Estate, only as she knows that she was married to him, and actually continues to be his Wife.

3. THERE is an essential Difference between a full Assurance, that those, who receive Christ, and come to God in his Name, shall be pardoned, justified and have eternal Life : and a Consciousness that I do receive Christ, and come to God in his Name, and am consequently pardoned, justified and entitled to eternal Life.— That those who receive Christ and come to God in his Name,



Name, shall be pardoned, justified, and have eternal Life, is plainly and expressly revealed in the Gospel, and was true before I was born. And it appears to be true to every one, who understands the Gospel aright, and believes it with all his Heart. But I must actually understand the Gospel, believe it with all my Heart, and in the belief of it actually receive Christ, and come to God in his Name, before I am justified; and so before I can be conscious to my self that I have so acted, and that consequently I am pardoned, justified and entitled to eternal Life.

4. ALTHOUGH Justification in the Sight of God, must of Necessity be in order of Nature before our Knowledge that we are justified; because a Thing must exist before it's Existence can be perceived by the Mind: yet it is not impossible that a justified Believer may know his Justification soon, from an inward Consciousness of his receiving Christ, and coming to God in his Name, and from a Consciousness of all the Christian Graces, which are connected with, and do always accompany true Faith. At Conversion, a Sinner is brought out of *Darkness into marvellous Light, and beholding the Glory of the Lord, is changed into the same Image*; and will of Course therefore in the Time of it, in all ordinary Cases, at least, naturally be conscious of the Change. And the greater the Change is, the more conscious will he be of it. And no Man can prove but that Divine Light may possibly be imparted in so great a Degree, and the Change be so clear, that at once it may be known to be a saving Change. I do not say, that it is always, or that it is ordinarily so, Now-a-Days: but I am willing to grant that it may be so. And from many Expressions in the new Testament, I am inclined to think it was commonly so in the Apostolic Age. The three Thousand on the Day of Pentecost, not only *received the Word gladly*, but immediately began to spend their Time in *praising God*; Act. ii. 41, 47. and Converts in that Age in general being *justified by Faith, had Peace with God, and rejoiced in Hope of the Glory of God*; Rom. v. 1, 2. *Whom having*

not seen, ye Love; in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye (one and all) rejoyce with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. nor do we read of one Saint in the New Testament, who doubted of his being in a justified State: nor have we any Reason, from the Writings of the New Testament, to think, but that Assurance of their good Estate was universally enjoyed by all true Believers in the Apostolic Age.

AND here, by the Way, this inclines me to entertain charitable Tho'ts of the *first Reformers*, that their Hearts might be right, even altho' it could be proved, that they made Assurance, of the Essence of Faith; as it is affirmed, by some, that they did. For they were in the heat of Dispute with the *Papists*, who denied that Assurance was at all attainable in this Life. But good Men among the *first Reformers* might be conscious to themselves, that they had had Assurance from the very Time of their Conversion; and might observe from the apostolic Writings, that it used to be so with the apostolic Converts; and might observe it to be so with their Converts; and so, thro' want of proper Attention to the Nature of Things, might be led to affirm, that Assurance it self is of the Essence of Justifying Faith. And by that one false Maxim, be insensibly led into many other Mistakes. But the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, who sat about an hundred Years after the Reformation, time having been had mean while to look more carefully into Things, and to distinguish between Things that differ, left Assurance out of their Definition of Justifying Faith, in their *Confession of Faith*; *Larger*, and *Shorter Catechisms*. Nay, they even expressly affirm, in their *Larger Catechism*, in Answer to *Question 81*. "That Assurance of Grace and Salvation are not of the Essence of Faith." For while it was affirmed, that Assurance was of the Essence of Faith, by the Protestant Preachers, two Things would constantly happen, it may reasonably be supposed, which would tend to convince them, that they were wrong, viz. 1. Many of their seeming Converts, who appeared to be full of the strongest Assurance of the Pardon of their Sins,

Sins, would apostatize and fall away to open Wickedness, before their Eyes : as it has been with many in our Day.

2. And their Adversaries, the *Papists*, who hated all Assurance of Salvation in general, as the *Arminian* Party do in our Day, would take the Advantage of their Mistake, and make such Objections against them, as they could not answer. Which, when the heat of the Controversy was a little over, and the *Protestant* Party had had Time impartially to weigh Things, loth as Men naturally are to give up a Point they have once espoused, they would feel themselves obliged to do it, in this Case.—And accordingly it came to pass, within about an hundred Years, that *Protestant* Divines in general gave up that Notion, and defined Faith, in a very different Manner ; as we may see in the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* of the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, and yet retained the Doctrine of Assurance, and asserted it in the strongest Language, but not as being of the Essence of Faith, but as resulting “from the inward Evidence of those Graces, unto which the Promises are made.” And in *New England*, which was settled about that Time, that Notion has been, from the very first Settlement of it, to this Day, universally exploded, by all our Divines of Note. Nay, I never heard of but one single Minister, in *New-England*, who appeared in Print to defend that Notion, that Assurance is of the Essence of Faith ; and he is a Minister over a sepearte Congregation. And Testimony has been publickly born against him in Years past, by some of the most noted Ministers in the Country. In *Scotland*, when this Notion was above forty Years ago, advanced and propagated among them, by some who have since sepeared themselves from that Church, it was condemned by the *General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, as being contrary to the Word of God, to their *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* ; and all their Ministers were strictly prohibited, under the pain of the Censures of that Church, by Writing, Printing, Preaching, Catechising, or in any other

other Way, to teach this, and the other Doctrines in Connection with it. \* These Things are not said, to determine what is Truth, by the Names and Influence of fallible Men. To do so, would be to justify the whole *popish* Party, in their appeal to the *Pope*, to decide all Points of Religion; and to give up the first Maxim on which the Reformation was built; viz. *That the Word of God is the only Rule of Faith and Manners*. It is not what the *first Reformers* said, nor what the *Assembly of Divines* said, nor what any other Men or Body of Men, since the Apostles were dead, have said, or do say, that can determine any Doctrine of Religion, or settle any Point of Controversy about Religion. If they cannot be settled by the holy Scriptures, they must remain for ever undetermin'd in this World. And to be unwilling to appeal to the Bible, and to that alone, to determine what is Truth; is a full Proof a Man is at Heart an Infidel. He don't really believe the Bible is the Word of God, nor build his Scheme of Religion upon it; but upon his own Experiences, or the Sayings of others, whose Experiences he imagines were like his own. However what has been said, may let the Public see, how I can consistently entertain an Opinion, that some Men's Hearts may be more orthodox than their Heads,

- \* See the *Acts of the general Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1720, Act V. and 1722, Act VII. particularly these Words, out of a Book intituled, the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, were expressly condemned, viz. "wherefore as Paul, and  
 " *Silas*, said to the jailor, so say I unto you, *believe on the*  
 " *Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; that is, be verily  
 " persuaded in your Heart, that Jesus Christ is your's, and  
 " that you shall have Life and Salvation by him, that  
 " whatsoever Christ did for the Salvation of Mankind, he  
 " did it for you — Forasmuch as the holy Scripture speak-  
 " eth to all in general, none of us ought to distrust himself,  
 " but believe that it doth belong particularly to himself." These Words were expressly condemned, as making saving Faith consist in, "a Man's Perswasion that Christ is his, died for him," &c.



Heads, in this Matter; which was the Point I was upon. †

BUT while true Converts may, from their first Conversion, from a Consciousness of the saving Change they have passed thro', be perswaded, that they are in a State of Favour with God, and *Rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God*; Satan, that great Enemy to all Good, may *transform himself into an Angel of Light*, and delude Hundred and Thousands & ten Thousands (and it is foretold that Satan is to *deceive the Nations* 'till the Thousands Years of Christ's Reign do commence, *Rev. xx. 3.*) with a firm Belief that their Sins are forgiven, who never were converted; and so oblige them to believe their Sins are forgiven, when according to the plainest Declarations of Scripture, they are not forgiven; and so necessitate them in order to vindicate themselves, to assert, that in justifying Faith "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it," and that without any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason."

And these false Converts, emboldened by the greatness of their Number, may rise, cut out a whole new Scheme of Religion subversive of Christianity, and seek to propagate it thro' the Christian World, shewing the greatest Rancor against the true Gospel of Christ. Mean while, true Christians may get puzzled, stumbled and bewildered, and some perhaps brought unawares to espouse the Language of the deluded, and to seem to plead their Cause. And the common Enemies to all experimental Religion, rejoyce in Hopes it will finally appear to all the World, that there is nothing in vital Piety,

† It is very observable, that Mr. *Willson*, who is constantly repeating it, that all the *protestant World* are on his side, and glorying in it, is obliged, in the midst of it all, to own, that while some hold, that *Assurance is of the Essence of Faith*; others only maintain, that *Assurance accompanies it*: (p. 97) two Things in their Nature essentially different, nay contrary to each other.—For to say, that *Assurance accompanies Faith*, is to say, "it is not Faith, but something else, which true Believers are wont to have in Company with Faith."



Piety, and that all Religion consists in an external regular Behaviour; and it is no matter what Men's Principles be, if their Lives are but good: which is nothing better than down-right Infidelity.

THIS I take to be the Devil's Grand Scheme, in this present Age; and to counteract this his Design has been one chief End of all my former Publications: and so now of this. — But to return, and to proceed to state the Question to be disputed:

IN the beginning of my *third Dialogue*, which was on the Nature of *Assurance of a Title to eternal Life*, I had said, that “Sanctification, taking the Word in a large and comprehensive Sense, is the Evidence, the only Scripture-evidence, of a good Estate.” And to prevent Misunderstanding, I added, “It is usual for Divines to distinguish between Regeneration and Conversion, between first Conversion & progressive Sanctification, between Divine Views and holy Affections, between Grace in the Heart and an holy Life and Conversation; but I mean to comprehend all under one general Name. You may call it the *Image of God, or Holiness of Heart and Life*, or a real Conformity to the Divine Law, and a genuine Compliance with the Gospel of Christ. I have already let you see, what I apprehend to be the Nature of Law and Gospel; of Love to God and Faith in Christ. — When I say, this is the *only Evidence*, I mean, that this is the only Thing wherein Saints and Sinners, in every Instance, *differ*. One has the Image of God, the other has not. — Or to express my self in the Language of Inspiration, Joh. xvii. 3. *This is Life eternal, to know that the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* And, 1 Joh. ii. 3, 4, 5. *Hereby we do know that we do know him, if we keep his Commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him. But who so keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in him.*”

In answer to which Words, Mr. Cudworth says, this  
“is

"is no other than the Assurance of the Pharisee." *Further Defence*, p. 265.—but why? because, says he, "it is only founded on the Difference there is between him and other Men"—To which I reply; and this may as well be objected against the Assurance of all the apostolical Saints; as is evident from 1 *Joh. ii. 3, 4, 5.* the very Text I quoted. For they knew they loved God, and kept his Commands, while the rest of the World lay in Wickedness. And therefore they said, 1 *Joh. v. 19. We know that we are of God, and the whole World lieth in Wickedness.* And will Mr. Cudworth affirm, that their Assurance was that of the Pharisees? Besides there is a Fallacy in his Words: For the apostolical Assurance did not arise merely from a Conscience, they differed from others; which might be true, and yet they have no Grace; as was the Case with the Pharisee; but from a Conscience, that their Characters were agreeable to the Gospel Standard; that they had those Graces which, according to Christ's holy Religion, are peculiar to the Saints, and certainly connected with eternal Life. Upon this, their Assurance was built, just as I had represented. However, if Mr. Cudworth's Words prove nothing else, yet at least they seem to be a sufficient Evidence of his hearty Disaffection to the only scriptural Assurance of a good Estate. And he appears to think with his late Friend, that we may as well "place the dome of a Cathedral on the Stalk of a Tulip," as place our Assurance on this only scriptural Foundation.—But how then would we have us get Assurance? even by believing that our sins are forgiven, while conscious that we are upon a Level with the worst of Sinners, no difference between us and them, as dead in Sin, as impenitent and unconverted, and as full of Enmity to God.—And this Belief is to beget our first Love.—But alas, what Grounds have we for this Belief? What Evidence for the Truth of what we believe? why none at all, says honest Mr. Marshall, "from Scripture Sense or Reason." For the Fact believed to be true "is not true before we believe it."

And as Mr. Cudworth affirms Assurance from a Conscience

cioufness of Sanctification, to be the Assurance of the *Pharisee*; so his Brother Mr. *Wilson*, with the same Spirit, affirms it to be the Assurance of *Papists*, perhaps an hundred Times over; \* altho' he well knew, that the *Papists* join with *Antinomians*, in denying that a certain Assurance, from a Conscioufness of our own Sanctification, is attainable in the present Life; † how then would

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\* See Mr. *Wilson's Review of Palæmon's Creed*. Vol. 2. p. 101. and else-where thro' both his Volumes. — N. B. The particular References to Mr. *Wilson*, which will be made in these Sheets, will be to his 2d Vol. in which he has made some Remarks on my *Dialogues*. I here give Notice of it once for all.

† Page 104. Mr. *Wilson* says, speaking of the *Papists*, “as it is supposed, that Men will frequently have too much Reason to suspect the sincerity of their own Love and Obedience; whether the former be genuine, and the latter such as God will accept of; they granted, that any hope of Salvation Men can attain to in this mortal State, must, and ought, still to be mixed with Fear and Doubting: — They never can attain to any absolute Certainty about it. Such were the leading Sentiments of the most eminent Teachers in the *Romish Church*”

AND how exactly agreeable these Sentiments are to the Sentiments of the most eminent Teachers of Mr. *Wilson's* Party, the following Words of the celebrated Mr. *H—y*, will show. This Method of seeking Peace and Assurance, I fear, will perplex the simple Minded; and cherish, rather than suppress the Fluctuations of Doubt. For, let the Signs be what you please, a Love of the Brethren, or a Love of all Righteousness, a Change of Heart, or an Alteration of Life; these good Qualifications are sometimes like the Stars at Noon-day, not easily, if at all, discernible: or else they are like a Glow-worm in the Night, glimmering, rather than shining: Consequently, will yield, at the best, but a feeble,—at the worst, a very precarious Evidence — If, in such a Manner, we should acquire some little Assurance, how soon may it be unsettled by the incursions of daily Temptations, or destroyed by the Insurrection of remaining Sin! at such a juncture, how will it keep its

Standing

Mr. *Wilson* have us get Assurance? even, by believing our Sins are forgiven, without any Consciousness of any Grace in us, “without any Reflection upon the Act of Appropriation made by the Believer, or a Persuasion of the Truth of his own Faith.” p. 123. “Without knowing any Thing further about *their State*, than that they are by Nature *Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Hell*, “under the Curse of an angry Sin-revenging God.” p. 175. These are his own Words.

BUT how shall we know that our Sins are forgiven? are our Sins forgiven while we are in an impenitent, unconverted, christless State? are they forgiven even while we are “Heirs of Hell, and under the Curse of an angry God?” that is, forgiven, when they are not forgiven! an express Contradiction this! or are we to believe they are forgiven, when in Fact they are not forgiven? yes, this is the very Thing *Antinomians* use to hold, that the Elect are justified from Eternity, or from the Resurrection of Christ, and that in due time their Justification is manifested to them by the Spirit, on which they commence Believers. And this Scheme, how contrary soever to the BIBLE, was consistent with it self. But that Scheme is now modelled. And now they say, that in Justifying Faith, “we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it.” This

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Mr.

“Standing! how retain its Being! it will fare like a tottering Wall, before a Tempest; or be as the Rush without Mire, and the Flag without Water.

BUT while *Papists* and *Antinomians* thus join to deny any certain Assurance by our own inherent Graces, *the Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, agreeable with the holy Scriptures, strongly assert it. *Conf. of Faith*, Chap. xviii. “Such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in Sincerity, &c may in this Life be certainly assured, that they are in a State of Grace.” — “This Certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable Persuasion—but an intalible Assurance of Faith, founded upon the divine Truth of the Promises of Salvation, the inward Evidence of those Graces unto which these Promises are made,” &c.



Mr. *Marshall* had said. And this Saying of Mr. *Marshall*'s, Mr. *Wilson* undertakes to vindicate, (p. 14.) pretending full Assurance that the whole Bible and all the *Protestant* World are on his Side.

Mr. *Cudworth* was affrighted & shock'd at the Thought of "believing that to be true which is not true before we believe it, without any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason," after I had shewn the Absurdity of it in the *twelve Queries* in my *second Dialogue*. He felt he could not answer my Reasoning. He was afraid. He durst not look the Point fairly in the Face. He turned his Eyes, and buried himself in Obscurity in the midst of a Multitude of ambiguous Words. And to pacify his credulous Reader, says, that I misrepresent their Scheme; when he, at the same Time, knew, that I had represented it exactly as Mr. *Marshall*, a Writer highly celebrated by all their Party, had done. See his *Further Defence*, p. 246.

BUT Mr. *Wilson* is a Man of Courage; he thinks he can maintain the Point: He sees it must be done, or their whole Scheme be given up. He has tried: He has doubtless done his best. And this is the very Point now to be examined, *viz.* Whether in justifying Faith "we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it?"

A Position in it self so evidently absurd, that were it not made Use of to deceive Multitudes of precious Souls, it would not deserve the least Attention of any Man of Sense. But Matters being as they are, it is worth while to examine it. And it is worth while for all concerned in the *British* Dominions to attend to the Subject. For it lies at the Foundation of their whole Scheme. And if this single Position is false, their whole Scheme is false. For they all affirm that, our Sins are not forgiven before we believe they are forgiven. And that in the first direct Act of justifying Faith we believe they are forgiven. And therefore it is, and must be, a fundamental Maxim with them, upon the Truth of which their whole Scheme depends, that, in justifying Faith, we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it. No



No Writer, I ever saw, has expressed the Matter with such undisguised Honesty and Simplicity, as their celebrated Mr. Marshall, whose *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, they profess to value next to the Bible: Let us therefore hear his own Words, look into their plain and natural Meaning, and state distinctly the Point to be disputed.

Mr. Marshall's Words are these, and the more we think of them, the more remarkable will they appear. "Let it be well observed, that the Reason why we are to assure our selves in our Faith, that God freely giveth Christ and his Salvation to us in particular, is not because it is a Truth before we believe it, but because it becometh a certain Truth when we believe it; and because it never will be true, except we do in some Measure persuade and assure our selves that it is so. We have no absolute Promise or Declaration in Scripture, that God certainly will or doth give Christ and his Salvation to any one of us in particular; neither do we know it to be true already by Scripture or Sense or Reason, before we assure our selves absolutely of it; yea, we are without Christ's Salvation at present, in a State of Sin and Misery; under the Curse and Wrath of God. Only—we are bound by the Command of God, thus to assure our selves: and the Scripture doth sufficiently warrant us, that we shall not deceive our selves, in *believing a Lie*: but *according to our Faith, so shall it be to us.* Mat. ix. 29. This is a strange Kind of Assurance, far different from other ordinary Kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many Doubtings. We are constrained to believe other Things on the clear Evidence we have that they are true, and would remain true, whether we believe them or no; so that we cannot deny our Assent, without rebelling against the Light of our Senses, Reason, or Conscience. But here our Assurance, is not impressed on our Thoughts by any Evidence of the Thing; but we must work

"it out in our selves by the Assistance of the Spirit of God." *Mystery*, p. 173, 174 — In this plain, honest Declaration, which opens to clear view the Heart and Soul of their whole Scheme, these *eight Things* may be observed.

I. In general : That "this is a **STRANGE** Kind of Assurance, FAR DIFFERENT from other ordinary Kinds." In all other Kinds of Assurance, he observes, there are these two Things. (1.) What we believe "is true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or no." (2.) "We are constrained to believe on the clear Evidence we have that they are true." But "this is a strange Kind of Assurance, far different from other ordinary Kinds," in these two Respects. (1.) As we believe "that to be true, which is not true before we believe it; and never would be true, if we did not believe it." (2.) As we believe "without any Evidence of the Thing." — "Any Evidence from Scripture; Sense or Reason." — Herein the *Strangeness* consists; and its Difference from all other Kinds of Assurance in the Universe.

A true Convert gets Assurance thus. — The Word of God teaches, *Joh. i. 12.* That he who receives Christ and believes in his Name, is a Child of God : But I receive Christ and believe in his Name ; therefore I am a Child of God. — Again, the Word of God teaches, *Acts iii. 19.* That he who repents and is converted shall have his Sins blotted out : \* But I repent and am converted ; therefore my Sins are blotted out. — Once more, the Word of God teaches *Acts xvi. 31.* That he who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved : But I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ; therefore I shall be saved. — This is the "ordinary" Way of getting Assurance. And the Things believed are true before we believe them : and we believe only in exact Proportion to our Evidence.

But in "this strange Kind of Assurance," a Sinner who as yet is impenitent, unconverted, has not received Christ, nor believed in his Name, but is "under the Wrath and Curse of God," believes his Sins are forgiven ;

given; not because they are, for they are not; not because he has Evidence they are, for he has none; but full Evidence to the contrary. But say they, because God has commanded him to believe that they are forgiven, and promised that if he believes they are forgiven, they shall be forgiven. That is, God has commanded him to believe a Lie, and promised that if he believes that lie, it shall become a Truth. "According to our Faith so shall it be to us."—Not that that Text in *Mat. ix. 29.* speaks a Word about "this strange Kind of Assurance:" For it does not. The Thing the two blind Men believed was true before they believed it: and they were constrained to believe by clear Evidence. *viz.* That Christ was able to open their Eyes. See ver. 27, 28.—No. This Kind of Assurance is so *strange*, that it is not so much as once required, commanded, exhorted to, or recommended in the Bible: nor any thing like it. Nor indeed is there any Thing like it in the Universe. For it is in truth "a strange kind of Assurance, *far different* from other ordinary Kinds."—But to be more particular, and that even those who are of the weakest Capacity, may not only think, but be quite certain, that we do not misunderstand this Author, so very highly celebrated by Gentlemen of the first Rank on that Side of the Question, observe,

2. THE thing to be believed is a supposed Fact, which has no Existence, *viz.* "that God freely giveth Christ and his Salvation to us in particular." Which he says, "is not true before we believe it." But pray, what does he mean by God's giving Christ and his Salvation to us in particular?" We often read in the Bible of the *Gift of Christ*, but every thing taught in the Bible relating to that grand and glorious Affair, is true before we believe, and whether we believe or no. For Instance, is it not true, whether we believe it or not, that *God so loved the World, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life?* *Joh. iii. 16.* And are not those Words true whether we believe them or not, that *God hath*

given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son? 1 Joh. v. 11. And again, were not those Words true, whether the Jews believed them or not, *My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven?* Joh. vi. 32. Yes, beyond all Doubt, all these Things are true, and every single Sentiment implied in them is true, has been true above these Thousand Years, and will remain true, whether we believe them or not. And indeed this is the Case with all the Truths contained in the Bible; yea, with every single Truth in the Universe. They are true before we believe them, and whether we believe them or not.

WHAT then does Mr. *Marshall* mean by God's giving Christ and his Salvation to us in particular? which he says, "is not true before we believe it. Not *that giving of Christ* we read of in the Bible: but something essentially different. He plainly means *giving us in particular a saving interest in Christ and his Salvation*: granting us Pardon, Justification and a Title to eternal Life, while impenitent and unconverted. This is plain from what he considers as opposite thereto. "Yea, we are without Christ's Salvation at present, in a state of Sin and Misery, under the Wrath and Curse of God." Which Words determine his meaning with the utmost Certainty. So that the Fact to be believed to be true is this, that we have a *saving Interest in Christ*, are delivered from "the Wrath and Curse of God," are pardoned and entitled to eternal Life: and indeed this is no more than Mr. *Wilson*, and all others in his Scheme, hold, that we do believe, in the first direct Act of justifying Faith; and without which they all affirm our Faith is not saving. To be sure Mr. *Wilson* affirms this, over and over again, perhaps an Hundred Times, thro' both his Volumes. Particularly p. 145. he defines justifying Faith in these Words. "Justifying Faith is a believing the Remission of Sins with special Application to a Man's self — Now observe,

3. Mr. *Marshall* says, "this is not true before we believe it." But had it been declared, expressly or implicitly



explicitly, in the Word of God, it had been true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or not : for this is the Case with every Declaration in the Bible. But Mr. *Marshall* is so open, frank and honest, as to own that it is not taught in the Word of God. "We have no absolute Promise or Declaration in Scripture, that God doth or will give Christ and his Salvation to any one of us in particular.—Yea, we are without Christ's Salvation at present, under the Wrath of God." —Therefore,

4. The thing to be believed to be true, instead of being true before we believe it, is false. Yea, is known to be false, is owned to be false, is publicly declared before the World to be false. Instead of our having a saving Interest in Christ, we "are under the Wrath and Curse of God."—And therefore this honest Man, in perfect Consistence with himself, declares,

5. NEITHER do we know it to be true already by Scripture, or Sense, or Reason."—our Assurance is not "impressed on our Thoughts by ANY Evidence of the Thing.—And indeed, nothing could be more absurd and Self-contradictory, than to pretend (as some of the Party seem to do) to have any Evidence of the truth of a Fact, which is known and acknowledged not to be true. For if we not only think, but know, that it is not true ; we know that there is Evidence of its Untruth. Not simply, no Evidence of its truth ; but full Demonstration of it's Falshood.† But how a Man, not given up

† *Mr. Marshall's* meaning is so plain, that it seems impossible it should be any plainer. And these Words did not drop from his Pen inadvertently ; but the plain Truth of the Case drew them from him. For he has said nothing but what is absolutely essential to their Scheme. He knew it was so ; and he had Honesty enough to own it. True, Mr. *Cudworth* was sensible, he could not vindicate the Scheme, set in this open honest Light. Therefore he (absolutely without any Grounds) pretends I misrepresent their Scheme ; and then burlesques up himself in a heap of ambiguous Words ; without attempting to answer my *Queries* upon the Point. But I appeal



up to Delusion, can believe that to be true, which he certainly knows is false, may puzzle a *Locke* or *Newton* to say. However, *Mr. Marshall* goes on to declare,

6. THAT herein lies the great difficulty of Believing, not as it is with divine Truths, because the thing to be believed is contrary to our vicious Byasses; (*Joh. iii. 19.*) but meerly because we have no Evidence of it's Truth, but full Demonstration that it is false. "This is a strange kind of Assurance, far different from other ordinary Kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many Doubtings." — But pray, wherein does it differ from all other Kinds of Assurance? and why is it so difficult to be obtained? He goes on to say, "we are constrained to believe other things on the clear Evidence that we have that they are true, and would remain true, whether we believe them or no: so that we cannot deny our Assent, without rebelling against the Light of our Senses, Reason or Conscience: but here our Assurance is not impressed on our Thoughts BY ANY EVIDENCE OF THE THING." — And on this Account, and meerly on this Account, is it difficult to believe this Fact: For there is no Man but that would be glad to believe, that instead of going to Hell after Death, he shall be for ever happy in Heaven. *Balaam* said, *let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my latter End be like his.* So that wicked Men would be glad to get this Faith; and

appeal to all Men of common Sense, into whose Hands this shall come, whether I do not understand *Mr. Marshall's* Words in the Sense, the very Sense, the only Sense they can possibly bear — It is plain beyond dispute, that *Mr. Wilson* understands them in the very Sense I do. For, as we shall see presently, he maintains, that in justifying Faith "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." — Well! — if it is not true, it is false. — And if it is not true, it implies a Contradiction to say, that there is "any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason," of its Truth. And therefore if it be believed at all, it must be "without any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason," as *Mr. Marshall* honestly owns.

and if they cannot get it, it is not because they are not willing to have it; as was the Case with the wicked Jews, whom Christ upbraided, Joh. v. 40. *Ye WILL NOT come to me that ye might have Life*; but merely because they have not "any Evidence of the thing." So then they are not to blame for their Unbelief; for it is no Crime. Rather they are to be pitied; for it can be considered only as a Calamity. And accordingly several Writers have of late appeared in *Great-Britain* zealous to prove, that Faith is no Duty, and Unbelief no Sin.

Thus far then Mr. Marshall's Words are plain, and his Meaning easy to be come at: but the next Particular is not without some Difficulty. For,

7. He says, that the Fact not being true, but rather known to be false, and so there being no Evidence of any Kind, or from any Quarter to build our Faith upon, we must therefore "work it out in your selves by the Assistance of the Spirit of God." But how can a Man, in his right Senses, go about to work up himself to believe, that to true, which he knows is not true, but absolutely false? and which Way does a Man go to work in this Case? He does not look for Evidence; for he knows there is none from Scripture, Sense or Reason. Nay, he does not try to believe it to be true, as supposing it true; for he knows it is not true. But he tries to believe it is true, that it may become true, by his believing it to be true. Surprizing, shocking Affair!

AND all this by the Assistance of the Spirit of God."

—But pray, how can the Spirit of God grant any Assistance in such a Case? Were the Fact true, and were there Evidence of its Truth, we should need no Assistance in the Case. A wicked Man is as able and as willing to believe such a Fact as any Saint in the World. And since the Fact is known not to be true, and it is known there is no Evidence of its Truth, but full Demonstration of its Falshood, what Assistance can the Spirit of God grant in the Case? The *Psalmist* prays,

*Open*

*Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.* And if our vicious Biasses render us inattentive to, and prejudice us against, divine Truths; so that we are *slow of Heart* to believe them to be, what in Fact they are, whether we believe or no; or if we *hate the Light because our Deeds are evil*, if we hate the Truth because it condemns us, we may need the Influences of the Divine Spirit to remove our Prejudices, to open our Eyes, to make us attentive to and give us a relish for the Truth, to cause us to *favour the Things which be of God*; and so long as any Corruption remains in our Hearts, to blind our Minds to the holy Beauty and Glory of Divine Truths, we may need the Divine Spirit, to *open our Eyes, that we may behold wondrous Things out of God's Law.* But in this Case, there is no Prejudice in the Heart of the most wicked Man in the World to be removed; for the Fact believed would have suited Balaam himself. And it can be of no Advantage to have *our Eyes opened* in the Case; but rather a Disadvantage. For the wider our Eyes are opened, the more plainly and clearly shall we see, that it is not true, but absolutely false; that there is no Evidence of its Truth, but full Demonstration of its Falshood. There is nothing in the Case, therefore, to be done, by any Spirit, for us, but to put out our Eyes, and blind our Minds, that so we may, by the mighty Power of Delusion, be led firmly to believe a Lie. But surely, no Spirit will do this for us, but that wicked Spirit, who is the *Father of Lies, and a Murderer from the beginning.* He may bring Texts of Scripture to us, as once he did to our Saviour, and apply them to our Souls, one after another, till ravished with Joy, we cry out, "I know my Sins are forgiven! I know God loves me! I know I shall be saved! I am as certain of it, as of my own Existence! and should all the World say I am deluded, I would not regard them!" I have been particularly acquainted with many Instances of Sinners thus deluded. Numbers of our Converts in *New-England* twenty Years ago, were to all appearance converted thus.

THUS

THUS we have taken an impartial View of Mr. *Marshall's* Doctrine, the very Doctrine Mr. *Wilson* has undertaken to vindicate; and for a compleat stating the Question to be disputed, there is but one Observation more to be made.

8. A fundamental Maxim in Mr. *Marshall's* Scheme, on which all the rest depends; I say, A fundamental Maxim in Mr. *Marshall's* whole Scheme is, that in Justifying Faith “we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it.” And this Maxim is absolutely essential to his Scheme. For,

THE FACT believed is that “my Sins are forgiven.” or in other Words, “that I have a saving Interest in Christ and all the Benefits purchased by him.”—Now, if they say, that this is true before I believe it, they must, with the grossest Sort of Antinomians, hold, that *we are justified before Faith*, in express Contradiction to the whole Gospel.—This they do not, they dare not say.— They are therefore under an absolute necessity to say, that we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it.”

BUT if it is not true before we believe it, then every thing Mr. *Marshall* has said will inevitably follow. For if it is not true, it is false. If it is not true, there is, there can be, no “Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason” that it is true. And therefore we must believe “without any Evidence of the Thing.” And so it is “a strange kind of Assurance,” and “difficult to be obtained,” and we must “work it out in our selves.” And it being so contrary to common Sense, even to the Reason of all Mankind, to believe that to be true which we know is not true, we evidently need the *Assistance* of some Spirit in the Affair. Not the Spirit of God indeed, for he never helps Men to believe any thing, but what is true before we believe it.

If therefore it can be proved, that this fundamental Maxim is false, down goes their whole Scheme, and all who are settled upon it, lie buried in its Ruins.—

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1. It is self-evident, that in all Instances, a thing must exist, at least, in order of Nature, before it's Existence can be discerned by the human Mind. To say otherwise, is an express Contradiction. For, to discern that a Thing exists before it does exist, is to see that it is before-it is: Which is the same as to say, that a Thing may be, and not be, at the same Time. Which is an express Contradiction.—

BUT to believe *my Sins are forgiven*, is to discern that this Fact is really so, that this Thing does exist. It's Existence then is in order of Nature, before I discern it's Existence. For to say, I can see a Thing to be, which is not, is an express Contradiction. So then they must say, we are justified before Faith, or their Faith is an inconsistent, Self-contradictory Thing.

I am well aware, that this Sort of Converts, in their inward Experiences, are wont to have the Love of God and pardon of Sin, to their Apprehension, manifested to their Souls before they believe. For this Minifestation is the Ground of their belief: and indeed it would be simply impossible, they ever should believe, if they had not something of this Nature. For no human Mind can believe what appears to be not true. But it will not do to speak out this Secret, & tell the World plainly how it is. For then it would appear, that they are *justified before Faith*, and all would join to condemn them as *gross Antinomians*. And therefore they are obliged to give such an Account of their Faith, as in its own Nature evidently implies a Contradiction. Nor can you get one of these Men coolly and impartially to attend to this Point, because they are conscious of an insuperable Difficulty. Rather, they will bury themselves in obscurity, in a multitude of ambiguous Words, not at all to the Purpose. Witness Mr. Cudworth's *Farther Defence*, and Mr. Wilson's *Review*.

2. THE Thing believed to be true, is on their own Scheme, a Lie.—For,

THEY all hold that we are not pardoned 'till after Faith, at least in order of Nature. Besure, Mr. Wilson



son expresses this strongly. He says, p. 209, that "Justification is a *Consequent* of our Union with Christ by Faith." And to the same Purpose, page 194, 195, 205, &c.—Now, if it be a *Consequent* of our Union with Christ by Faith, then it does not exist till after Faith. Faith is in order of Nature before Justification. But their Faith consists in believing they are justified. And so it consists in the believing of a Lie. Unless they will contradict themselves, and say, that *Justification is not a Consequent of our Union with Christ by Faith.* Or else affirm, that to believe a Thing is, when it is not, is not to believe a Lie.——Besides,

THE Proposition believed to be true in their Faith, is what they themselves must own to be a Lie, on another Account: For in their Faith, the Proposition believed to be true is, *that an Unbeliever is justified.* For their Faith does not consist in believing this Proposition, viz. *I, who am a Believer, am justified.* For this is true, before it is believed, and whether it is believed or not.—But their Faith consists in believing this Proposition, viz. *I, who am an Unbeliever, am justified,* which, as they say, is not true before it is believed, and for the Truth of which we have no Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason.—For they all maintain, that in the first Act of Justifying-Faith, prior to any Reflection on my own Act, I believe my Sins are all forgiven, p. 102, 123. "without knowing any Thing further about my State, than that I am by Nature a Child of Wrath, "and an Heir of Hell, under the Curse of an angry "and Sin-revenging God." p. 175. But if I believe, that *I, who,* to my own Apprehension, *am an Unbeliever, am justified;* then I believe, that *an Unbeliever is justified;* which they own to be a Lie.—Indeed, they hold, that in my believing it to be true, it becomes true. And so tho' it was a Lie, yet now it becomes true. And so they keep themselves from seeing that what they believe, continues to be a Lie.—However, it was a Lie, when first believed, according to their own Scheme: For it becomes true, only in *Consequence* of their believ-

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ing it to be true.—And if God has never said, as in Fact he has not, that *if we believe our Sins are forgiven, they shall be forgiven*; what they believe is not only a Lie, when they believe it, but also continues to be a Lie, notwithstanding their Faith; and will be found to be so at the Day of Judgment, according to the express Declaration of our blessed Saviour, *Mat. vii. 21-27.*

BUT again, what they believe, may be proved to be a Lie, by another Argument.—Thus—according to Scripture, no impenitent Sinner, while such, ever was, or ever will be forgiven: But they believe themselves forgiven while impenitent: therefore what they believe is a Lie.—That no impenitent Sinner, while such, ever was, or ever will be forgiven, is plain from *Lev. xxvi.* throughout. *1 Kin. viii.* throughout. *Prov. xxviii. 13.* *Ijai. lv. 7.* *Luk. xiii. 5.* *Acts ii. 38.* & *iii. 19.* &c. &c. as I have proved at large in another Place (*Essay on the Nature of the Gospel. Sect. viii.*)—nor can these Men deny it, without expressly contradicting the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, which asserts, Chap. XV. That *no Sinner may expect Pardon without Repentance.* And if they give up that *Confession of Faith*, as heterodox, what will become of their bold Pretences, and confident Affirmation, That *all the Protestant World* are on their Side, except *Arminians, Baxterians, & ranting Sectaries?* "p. 95.—

But they believe themselves forgiven while impenitent. As is certain from this, that they all hold, that a belief they are forgiven is the very thing which causes them to begin to repent.—Therefore, their Faith consists in believing a Lie. — But

3. GRANTING the Fact believed, to be indeed true, yet as it is acknowledged to be no Truth revealed in the Gospel, their Faith is not an evangelical Faith, nor are those religious Affections, which flow from it, evangelical Graces. For as the Fact believed is not revealed in the Gospel, so it is no part of Gospel Truth. And so their Faith is not Gospel Faith, nor their Holiness, Gospel Holiness. For all Evangelical & holy Affections are excited in the Mind by Gospel Truths. *Psal. xix. 7.*

*Joh.*

*Job. xvii. 17. Jam. i. 18.* They may be called *Antinomians*; and they greatly resemble the ancient *Manicheans*; as I have shewn in the forementioned *Essay*! but they cannot with Propriety, be called *Christians*; for that which is the Foundation of their Scheme, is *no Part of Christianity*, is not once taught in Christ's Gospel; as they themselves acknowledge. For the whole Gospel, they own, is true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or not. But the first and fundamental Article of their Creed, and that from which all their religious Affections flow, is not true before they believe it to be true; and so it is *no Part of the Gospel*.

4. IN order to prove Mr. Sandeman's Faith, not to be justifying Faith, Mr. Wilson uses this Argument. "Every one who is possessed of justifying Faith, must undoubtedly be justified; but a general Belief of the Gospel, or a general Assent to the Truth of the Facts recorded in the New Testament, is to be found with many who are never justified: therefore a general Faith, or assent to the Truths of the Gospel, & History of the Facts recorded in the new Testament, is not justifying Faith." p. 72. — This Argument he asserts to be conclusive: But it is equally strong against himself. For, — "every one who is possessed of justifying Faith, must be undoubtedly justified; but a belief of the Remission of Sins, with application to a Man's self, which is his own Definition of justifying Faith, p. 145. is to be found with many who were never justified; as he himself owns, p. 102. therefore this belief is not justifying Faith."

SHOULD he say, that Self-deceived Sinners do not believe their Sins to be forgiven, upon the Testimony of God in his Word: the same is true on his Scheme, by his own Acknowledgement: for it was not true before he believed it. But the Testimony of God is true before we believe it, and whether we ever believe it or not: as he himself owns. Therefore his Faith is not built on the Divine Testimony: But rather, as Mr. Marshall says, "is without any Evidence from Scripture Sense or Reason."

Or should he say, that the Faith of deluded Sinners is not productive of Evangelical Graces: The same may be said of his Faith. For no religious Affections can be called evangelical Graces, which do not result from the Knowledge and Belief of some Truth revealed in the Gospel. But the supposed Truth, which is the Source of all their religious Affections, is not contained in the Gospel: as they themselves own.

Or should he say, that deceived Sinners are prompted to believe their Sins forgiven, from a self-righteous Spirit: Just this is the Case on the Scheme of these Men. As I have proved at large, *Essay*, Sect. IX. — There is no possible Way then for him to get rid of the Force of his own Argument. It is equally Conclusive against his Scheme, and Mr. Sandeman's: And does indeed confute them both at once.

THUS we see, that the Faith of these Gentlemen, in which they profess to believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it, — implies a Contradiction in it's own Nature — is the belief of a Lie — is no Gospel Faith — is nothing more than deluded Sinners may have: it is therefore very far from being that precious Faith, which is peculiar to God's Elect, and which is infallibly connected with eternal Life. — Nothing therefore now remains, but to attend carefully to Mr. Wilson's Arguments in it's Vindication, which may be summed up in these four.

*Mr. Wilson's Arguments to prove, that in Justifying Faith, we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it.*

Arg. I. FROM the Offers and Promises of the Gospel. His Notion is, that the Declaration of the Gospel amounts to this, — O, impenitent, unconverted, christless Sinner, believe and thou shalt be saved, i. e. believe thy Sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven. Believe thou shalt be saved, and it shall be to thee according to thy Faith. It is not true before we believe, but in be-

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believing it to be true, it becomes true. *According to thy Faith so shall it be to thee*, pa. 14. — But this Declaration is not made in the Gospel: but is a Lie; and he that believes it, believes a Lie; as has been already proved.

Mr. *Wilson* has laboured the Point, in Vindication of Mr. *Marshall's* Words, p. 28, 29, 30, 31. and this is the Sum and Substance of his Plea — “an offered Gift is not mine before I receive it.” — “But the offer gives me a Right to receive it.” — “to believe it mine is to receive it.” Therefore in Justifying Faith, we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it. — a meer Fallacy — to believe a Thing mine, is different from, and a Consequence of receiving it. — For instance, a Man offers me a Guinea; the Guinea suits my Heart, I receive it, I know I receive it, and so I know and believe it is mine: — But here is nothing like believing a thing to be true, which is not true before I believe it.

THE *Pharisees* firmly believed, that the God of *Abraham*, was their God and Father and Friend, and would make them happy for ever. This none can deny. But did they receive the God of *Abraham* for their God and Portion; as he was offered to them in the Old Testament? — No, far from it. — They hated and rejected him with all their Hearts, and murdered his very Image, his only begotten Son. Just so a deluded Sinner may be ravished in a belief, that Christ, Pardon and Heaven, are his own; and yet in the mean time may hate and reject with the utmost Abhorrence, that Christ, that Pardon, and that Heaven, which are offered in the Gospel, as I have shewn at large in the forementioned *Essay*.

“WE agree — that the Gospel proposes nothing to be “believed by us,” says Mr. *Wilson*, “but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not. — But if any “one should from hence infer, that the Gospel does “not afford sufficient Warrant, or lay a Foundation “for believing any thing, but what is infallibly true, “whether we believe it or not: This we beg Leave “to deny. For as God in the Gospel freely promises,

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“ We agree — that the Gospel proposes nothing to be believed by us,” says Mr. *Wilson*, “ but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not. — But if any one should from hence infer, that the Gospel does not afford sufficient Warrant, or lay a Foundation for believing any thing, but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not : This we beg Leave to deny. For as God in the Gospel freely promises,

“ or makes an offer of Life and Salvation to Sinners thro’ Jesus Christ, it is evident, the Promise cannot be believed, but in the way of *appropriating* the Gift, or believing they shall be saved through his Blood : which certainly cannot be said to be a Truth, whether we believe it or not ; for if it was, all who hear the Gospel would infallibly be saved.

“ THE Matter is plainly this : the Gospel no where proposes it as a Truth to be believed, that Men shall be saved through Christ, whether they believe or not ; but it every where testifies, that *he that believeth shall be saved*. Now this very Declaration published, and frequently repeated in the Gospel for the Encouragement of Sinners, makes it warrantable, for every one of them to believe his own particular Salvation thro’ Christ. And the Truth is, till he believes this upon the footing of the divine Promise, Faithfulness, or Veracity, he in effect, really and in the Sense of Scripture, disbelieves and calls in Question the Truth of the divine Testimony made known in the Proposition afore-mentioned. That he does so, evidently appears by his not crediting it, so as to rest his hope of Salvation wholly upon the Promise of God, and the Record which he has given of his Son, in the Gospel.” P. 14, 15.

Stop now, candid Reader, and critically examine these Words. “He disbelieves the divine Testimony,” says he. But why ? because “ he does not rest his hope of Salvation wholly upon the Promise of God.” — but pray, what promise ? Why this, “he that believeth shall be saved.” Which is so “frequently repeated in the Gospel,” — *He that believeth* ! that believeth what ! pray, what is the Sinner to believe ? he is to believe “his own particular Salvation.” — to “believe that he shall be saved.” — But is this the meaning of the Text ? Indeed no. That Proposition is not once used in this Sense in the Bible. The Gospel no where declares, that *he that believeth he shall be saved, shall be saved* : but very many times expressly to the contrary. The

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Thing believed is a Lie. But to believe a Lie, is not to believe in Christ; unless they make this Lie, that very Christ, on which they venture their all for Eternity. — Read the Bible thro', O impenitent, unconverted christless Sinner, and you may find enough such Declarations as these, *Repent and be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus for the Remission of Sins* — *repent and be converted that thy Sins may be blotted out* — *Except ye repent ye shall perish* — *repent, and believe the Gospel* — *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved* — and these Declarations are all true before you believe them, and whether you believe them or not. — But you can no where find any thing like this, *believe thy Sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven* — *believe thou shalt be saved, and thou shalt be saved*. — In this Case, what you believe is not true before you believe it, as they themselves grant. And believing a Lie, tho' it may make it seem true to you, yet it will not make it in Fact true.

PRAY, who is he that believes the divine Testimony? He that believes the very Thing God means to say; Or he that puts a new Meaning to God's Words, which God never intended, and which never came into his Heart? — May we not say of these Men, as our Saviour did of the Pharisees; *by your Traditions you make the Command of God of none Effect*. So by ~~their~~ *Faith* they make the Declarations of the Gospel a Lie. The Gospel declares, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*. But these Men teach, that if an impenitent, unconverted Sinner, while such, believes his Sins are blotted out, they are blotted out. — That is, if he believes a Thing to be true, which is directly contrary to the Declaration of the Gospel, it shall become true: And so his Faith shall cause the Declaration of the Gospel to become a Lie.

BESIDES, O Christless Sinner, what Warrant have you to believe that your Sins are forgiven? is it already true? no. But does "the Gospel propose any Thing to be believed by us, but what is infallible true, whether we believe it or not?" Mr. Wilson himself is obliged

obliged to say, no — But then says, “the Gospel warrants you to believe, what it does not propose to you to be believed.” — But is not this an express Contradiction? No, says Mr. *Wilson*. For “the Promise of the Gospel cannot be believed, but in believing that they shall be saved thro’ his Blood.” As if he had said, the Promise cannot be believed, but in believing what the Promise does not say. For the Promise does not say, that you in particular shall be saved. Or that you shall be saved, if you believe you shall be saved. So that here is another Self-contradiction, viz. A Promise cannot be believed, but in believing what is not contained in the Promise.

BUT, says Mr. *Wilson*, “if a Man offers me a Gift freely, I have certainly a Warrant to receive it, and in receiving it, to believe it mine.” p. 18. That is, conscious to my self, that I do receive it, I have good Evidence to believe it is mine. And in this Case, it is mine, in order of Nature, before I believe it mine. And so, what I believe is true, before I believe it. And so this Similitude is nothing to the Purpose, nor does it at all help to reconcile to common Sense their “strange Kind of Assurance, which is FAR different from other ordinary Kinds.” For they believe Christ is theirs, without any Consciousness that they receive him. p. 123. And constantly affirm that, that Assurance of an interest in Christ, which results merely from a Consciousness of any inherent Grace, is altogether *popish*.

BUT no Man can believe the Gospel, who does not believe his Sins are pardoned, in Mr. *Wilson*’s Judgment. p. 14, 123, &c. &c. — And yet he knows, and he owns, that this Fact is not revealed in the Gospel. Yea, he says, “it is not proposed in the Gospel to be believed by us.” p. 14. And yet no Man, he says, can believe the Gospel, who does not believe it. An express Contradiction again. — Mr. *Wilson* grants a Man may have saving Faith, and yet not know that it is saving. p. 123. Marg. But he would have a Sinner believe his Sins are pardoned, previous to one single Thought, that he has

has saving Faith. p. 123. But in this Case, it must be "without any Evidence of the Thing." However, he disbelieves the Gospel, if he does not believe it, altho' there is no such Thing in the Gospel — "A strange Kind of Assurance!"

BUT, says Mr. *Wilson*, "the stung Israelites, in looking to the brazen Serpent, had, every one of them, good Reason to believe, and fully assure himself, that he in particular should be healed." — And why? plainly because every Israelite, while conscious to himself that he is looking, must be certain of a Cure. — And just thus any Sinner, who is conscious to himself that he looks to Christ as he is invited to do, may be as certain of a Cure. But in Mr. *Wilson's* "strange Kind of Assurance," we must be certain of a Cure without any such Consciousness. p. 123. 'Tis *popish*, he constantly cries, to get Assurance from this Consciousness. But had a stung Israelite looked to the brazen Serpent, without being at the same time conscious to himself, that he did look, he could not have been assured of a Cure, notwithstanding his Belief of the divine Declaration, that *whoever looks shall be healed.*

BUT Mr. *Wilson* will again say, "had not the Israelites a good Warrant to take and eat the Manna which lay around their Tents? and has not every Sinner as good a Right to take Christ the Bread of Life, and eat and live for ever?" p. 31. Had the Israelites loathed the Manna so perfectly, as absolutely to refuse to gather and eat it; and in their Hunger, set themselves to work up a Belief, that their Bellies were full, without any Consciousness of the Thing, it might have been to Mr. *Wilson's* Purpose. But what was there in all their Conduct, at all resembling Mr. *Wilson's* Faith? They gathered the Manna, they made Cakes of it, they eat, they were refreshed, and they were conscious to themselves of all that passed. Here was no Assurance worked up "without any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason." Here was no believing any Thing to be true, but what was true before it was believed. Here

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was nothing but what was perfectly rational.—In short, here was nothing like these Men's Notion of Faith, not the least shadow of a Resemblance.—Nor indged is there in all Nature any Thing to resemble their Faith, unless among those who are delirious, who very often believe strongly Things to be true, which would have no Truth in them, if they did not believe them. But then, even the most delirious Man alive, never attempted to act so distractedly as to try to believe, that to be true, which he knew as yet was not true. This is peculiar to these Men, and there is nothing like it in the Universe. For, as honest Mr. *Marshall* says, “this is a *strange* kind of Assurance, *far* different from other ordinary Kinds.”—To hunt about therefore, for Similitudes, to represent it, is quite out of Character.—But the Men are shocked, to see their Scheme stark naked: and therefore these Similitudes, like Fig-leaves, are gathered to hide it's Nakedness. -- But all in vain.

Thus we have a Specimen of Mr. *Wilson's* Manner of Reasoning, to vindicate our believing that to be true, which is not true, from the Declarations, Offers and Promises of the Gospel. He repeats much the same Things perhaps 200 Times over in his two Volumes.—And when all is said and done, it comes to this:—“God has, in Fact, no where in his Word declared, that my Sins are forgiven; however I must believe they are forgiven, or I do not believe the Word of God.—It is not true before I believe it, but absolutely false; yet I have a good Warrant to believe it is true, altho' I have no Evidence of the Thing from Scripture, Sense or Reason.—In receiving a Gift, I know it is mine; but if this Knowledge arises from a Consciousness that I receive it, I am a *Papist*.”—So absurd, so Self-contradictory is his whole Course of Reasoning. And yet he pretends to have all the Bible, and all the *Protestant* World on his Side. And no Man can be saved, who is destitute of this unscriptural, irrational, inconsistent, Self-contradictory Thing, which he calls, by the sacred Name of Faith in Christ. — But let us proceed to another



another Argument, which like the former, is repeated over and over again, and scattered along thro' his whole Performance.

Arg. 2. FROM the *Nature of Reliance* on Christ's Righteousness. Perhaps this Argument is stated and urged no where to so good Advantage, as in p. 15, 16, 17. "It will not be denied, that the Gospel declares Christ to be an *all-sufficient* Saviour, and bears Testimony to his Righteousness as every way *sufficient* for the Justification of the most guilty Sinner. — If one approaching to a frozen Lake or River, over which he has Occasion to pass, tells me that he has been assured, by good Information, that the Ice was sufficiently strong to support him; and yet, after all, proves timorous, and averse to make trial, by venturing his Person freely upon it: I plainly perceive he has no Faith in the Report he heard; because he does not trust in it, or, which is the same thing, he cannot trust, rely, confide in, or venture himself on the Ice. — None can be said to believe the Report of the Gospel concerning the Righteousness of Christ, but those who, without being conscious of *any* personal Merit or good Qualification about themselves, rely *firmly* and *wholly* upon that Righteousness for Justification and Salvation. And it is equally certain, that such a firm Reliance, or fiducial Recumbency upon the Righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel, must, in the very Nature of the Thing, imply the Faith of *one's own* Justification and Salvation thro' this Righteousness. — For a Man to venture himself, and all his most valuable Interests, upon a Bottom that he doubts is weak and insufficient to support him, would be the greatest Folly imaginable; yet this he must do, who pretends to rely *wholly* upon Christ and his Righteousness for Justification and Salvation, and yet hath not the Faith of his own Salvation. — If a Man has been assured, by good Information, that the Ice of any frozen Lake or River he has occasion to pass over, is sufficiently

" strong

“ strong to support him ; and yet is timorous, and  
 “ doubts whether he will be safe if he should  
 “ venture upon it ; it is plain he does not con-  
 “ fide in, or give Credit to the Report he heard ; for  
 “ if he did, he would be as much assured of his own  
 “ Safety, as of the Truth of the Report, or the Vera-  
 “ city of him that made it. The Application is easy.—  
 “ Upon the whole, it is evident, that till a Man believes,  
 “ and is in some Measure assured of *his own* Justi-  
 “ fication and Salvation thro’ the Righteousness and  
 “ Blood of Christ, he never truly believes the Report  
 “ of the Gospel, or the divine Testimony concerning  
 “ the same. Let the Reader then judge whether there  
 “ is any Truth or Sense, in asserting, that the Hearers  
 “ of the Gospel, have no Warrant to believe any  
 “ Thing but what is infallibly true, whether they be-  
 “ lieve it or not.”—— To which, I Answer,

1. It is written, *He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.* I hear the Report, I understand it, I believe it with all my Heart ; and in the belief of it, *I come to God by Christ*, for Salvation. I am conscious to my self, I do so. And so I believe I shall be saved. But what I believe is true before I believe it, and whether I believe it or not. For he who *comes to God by Christ*, shall be saved, whatever Doubts he may have of his good Estate. And here is nothing believed, but upon good Evidence. And nothing like their “strange Kind of Assurance,” which is worked up “without any Evidence of the Thing.” As Mr. Marshall honestly states the Case.—— For,

2. On their Scheme *they believe they shall be saved*, without any Consciousness of their *coming to God by Christ*, as Mr. Wilson declares over and over again. p. 102, 123. They believe their *Sins are forgiven*, without any Consciousness of *Repentance, Conversion, or Faith in the Blood of Christ*. They believe they shall have a safe Passage over the Lake, without any Consciousness of *venturing or walking on it*. And so they believe some-  
 thing

thing to be true, which in Fact is not true; and which at the Day of Judgment, will be found to be a Lie.

COME, candid Reader, come go with me, to the Side of a frozen Lake: View the Ice with your own Eyes, and behold and see, it is full ten Feet thick. And will not this bear the Weight of a single Man? Yea, will it not bear the Weight of a thousand Men? You therefore cannot doubt of the safety of venturing upon it, "without rebelling against the Light of your Reason, Senses and Conscience." And if you venture upon it, it is equally evident you will be safe. "You are constrained to believe it by the clearest Evidence." It is true before you believe it. You are certain it is true from "the clearest Evidence." You are then at the furthest Distance from any thing like their Faith, nor have you the least occasion to work up your self to believe any thing "which is not true before you believe it, without any Evidence of the thing."—— So

COME, O enlightned Sinner, whose Eyes are opened to see the whole Gospel Plan in its Glory. Come view this Way of Salvation with your own Eyes. See God the Father, the infinitely glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, to magnify his Law, which this revolted World all join to hate, and to condemn Sin, which this apostate World all join to justify; even see him, set forth his own Son, of equal Glory with himself, to be a Propitiation, to declare his Righteousness, that consistently with the honour of his Government, he may pardon the penitent Sinner, that comes to him in the Name of Christ, and looks only to free Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus. View the infinite Dignity of the Mediator—view his Mediatorial Character, Office and Work—see how he has, in his Life and Death, magnified the Law and made it honourable—see the eternal Father, how infinitely well pleased he is, in what his Son has done.—He raises him from the Dead—sets him at his own right Hand.—*Repentance and Remission of Sins* are proclaimed to a guilty World in his Name—and the Cry is, *Repent and be converted that your Sins may be blotted out*—Can there be a Doubt now whether it is  
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safe to venture your all upon this Mediator, and return to God in his Name? infinitely hateful, odious, and undeserving as you are! impossible! so sure as Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah — so sure as he died on the Cross, and now reigns at his Father's right Hand; even so sure and certain it is, that it is safe for a Sinner, for the greatest Sinner, for any Sinner, to repent and come to God in his NAME. — "Are you not constrained to believe this, by the clearest Evidence?" And is it not equally certain, that if you *repent, convert, and come to God in the Name of Christ*, venturing your all for Eternity *wholly & entirely* upon his Atonement, Righteousness and Merits, and the infinitely free Grace of God thro' him, as revealed in the Gospel; that you shall be safe, eternally safe. And therefore, in exact Proportion as you are conscious of these Things, you may be certain of your own Safety in particular. Nor have you any need, or any manner of Occasion, to believe any Thing to be true which is not true; or to believe without Evidence. Nay, you are set at the greatest Distance from this kind of *blind Faith*. — But on the other Hand,

WHAT Course for Comfort, can an impenitent, unconverted, christless Sinner, while such, blind to the Glory of God, to the Beauty of his Law, and to the Glory and All-sufficiency of Christ, take? if he will *believe his Sins are forgiven*, when in Fact they are not forgiven; and he knows in his Conscience they are not; he must believe without any Evidence of the Thing." And to call this, *Faith in Christ*; to call this, *trusting wholly in the Righteousness of Christ*, is to put *Darkness for Light*; and to substitute in the Room of *Christ*, a *Lie*, and nothing but a *Lie*, as the *sole Object* of their *Faith*.

Arg. 3. From the Nature of that Faith which was required of the Israelites; and for the want of which they could not enter into the Land of *Canaan*. "When God gave the Children of *Israel*, a promise of entering into the Land of *Canaan*," says Mr. *Wilson*, I presume "it will not be denied, that they had not only a War-rant, but that it was their indispensable Duty to believe, that he would bring them to the Possession of

" it,



“ it, notwithstanding the Difficulties they might have to  
“ encounter by the Way ;—yet it cannot be said it was  
“ infallibly true, that they should enter into the promised  
“ Land whether they believed or not ; for the Event pro-  
“ ved the contrary. It is evident then, that they were  
“ called to believe something that was not infallibly  
“ true, whether they believed it or not.” p. 18, 19. This  
“ is equally true of the Promise of the Gospel made  
“ to Sinners of Mankind indefinitely.” p. 23. For “ God  
“ hath given to all who hear the Gospel, a Promise of  
“ entering into his Rest of Heaven ; which gives every  
“ one of them sufficient Warrant to believe, that ---  
“ he shall be saved.” p. 23, 24. ----- “ This Promise is  
“ the *first* and *immediate* Foundation of Faith. ---- It is  
“ only by an *appropriating* and *fiducial* Persuasion there-  
“ of, that any one can commence a true believer of  
“ the Gospel, or attain to any certain Knowledge of  
“ his eternal Election.” p. 25. However the Thing to  
be believed is not true before they believe it, and never  
will be true unless they do believe it. p. 18—26. And  
therefore he concludes, that in justifying Faith, we be-  
lieve that to be true, which is not true before we be-  
lieve it. — To this I answer,

1. THE *Promise* which God made to *Abraham*, and  
confirmed by an *Oath*, in *Gen. xxii. 16.* referred to *Numb.*  
*xiv. 30.* (for God never did confirm by an *Oath* his Pro-  
mise to that Congregation who came out of *Egypt* ; there  
is no such Thing on Scripture Record. Therefore *Numb.*  
*xiv. 30.* has Reference to *Gen. xxii. 16.*) I say, the  
*Promise* which God made to *Abraham*, and confirmed by  
an *Oath*, in *Gen. xxii. 16.* to give the Land of *Canaan* to  
his Seed, was *unconditional* and *absolute*. And by it God  
obliged himself, to give *Abraham* a Seed, and in due  
Time, in spite of all Obstacles, whether from their  
own Temper, or the Opposition of others, to bring them  
to, and put them in Possession of the Land of *Canaan*.  
And had God, by any Means, eventually failed of do-  
ing this Thing, he would have been chargeable with  
the Breach of that *Promise*, which he made to *Abraham*.

Now this *absolute Promise* to *Abraham*, was a shadow

of that *absolute Promise*, which God the Father made to his Son, on his undertaking to offer up himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men; that he should *see his Seed, and prolong his Days*; that he should *see the Travail of his Soul, and be satisfied*. *Isai. liii.* By which Promise the Father absolutely obliged himself, that all *Christ's Seed* should finally be brought to the heavenly Canaan, notwithstanding all Opposition, from their own Hearts, and from every other Quarter. And if by any Means, any one of *Christ's Seed* should finally perish, God would be chargeable with a Breach of that Promise made to his Son.

BUT as St. Paul reasons, *Rom. ix. 6.* *All are not Israel, which are of Israel*; so not all the Seed of Abraham, according to the Flesh, had an Interest in the absolute Promise of the earthly Canaan, in the Sense, in which God originally intended it, and in the Sense, in which he afterwards explained it. For *Ishmael*, who was a Child of Abraham, was first cast off. And afterwards *Esau* was rejected. And afterwards *six Hundred Thousand* were cast off at once. And all, in perfect Consistence, with the divine Promise to Abraham. Nor was there, as Mr. *Wilson* insinuates, the least shew or appearance of any Breach of Promise. This was merely the impious and blasphemous Construction, the wicked Israelites put upon the divine Conduct. For by an *appropriating Act of Faith*, exactly of the same Nature with that Mr. *Wilson* pleads for, they had been fully persuaded, that they, in particular, should come to the Land of Canaan. And therefore, on their Disappointment, were ready to charge God with a Breach of Promise, *Numb. xiv. 3.* To which God, in great Wrath, says, *and ye shall know my Breach of Promise.* As if he had said, "this is what you impiously charge me with. But unmoved to alter my Determination, by your impious Charge, in the Wilderness you shall die: And if you call this a Breach of Promise, you shall know, I will break it thus: for assuredly your Carcases shall fall in the Wilderness."——And this is a lively Type of the final Doom, which will be passed, at the great Day, on all impenitent Sinners, who by an *appropriating Act of Faith*, have taken all the Promises to themselves,

selves, while in Fact, not one of them ever belong'd to them in the Sense, in which, they imagined. So they shall know *God's Breach of Promise*, just as the wicked Israelites did.

2. THE absolute Promise of the Land of *Canaan* made to *Abraham*, had no Respect to any, who were not of the Seed of *Abraham* according to the Flesh. And therefore unless a Man could produce his Genealogy, and prove himself a Descendant of *Abraham*, he could, by that Promise, claim no Right or Share in the Land of *Canaan*: For, without this, all the good Qualifications in the World would be no Weight to give a Man, a right to an Inheritance in that Land.

So the absolute Promise of the heavenly *Canaan* made to Christ, has no Respect to any but those who are *Christ's Seed*: those who are in *Christ*. And therefore unless a professed Christian can produce good Proof, that he is in *Christ*, he can claim no Title to Heaven, by virtue of that absolute Promise. Our own Righteousness, in this Case, can give no Title at all. *But if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise*, Gal. iii. 29.

WHEN therefore any Man, who is unconscious that he is united to Christ by Faith, is bold to put in a Claim to the heavenly *Canaan*, he is guilty of the grossest Presumption, and has no Evidence to support his Claim "from Scripture, Sense or Reason."

3. GOD's Promise in *Exod. iii. 17.* made to that Congregation which died in the Wilderness, of bringing them to the Land of *Canaan*, was not an absolute, but a conditional Promise, as is plain beyond all Dispute from *Numb. xxxii. 6—15.* which the Reader is desired to turn to. And indeed the Conditions, altho' not expressed in that Promise *Exod. iii. 17.* were plainly implied in the very Nature of the Thing. For if they should, from an Attachment to the Pleasures and Manners of Egypt, and from a mean and low Opinion of the Land of *Canaan*, or from a distrust of the Divine Power and Fidelity to conduct them safely thither, decline and finally refuse to march for *Canaan*; or if after they set out on their Journey, repent they ever entered on the Expedition, and desire to go back again; nei-

ther they, nor any Mortal else, would have had any reason to imagine, that God was obliged by that Promise he made to them in *Exod. iii. 17.* to bring them there. God's promise then to bring that Congregation to *Canaan*, left him at full Liberty, to kill them by Hundreds and Thousands, if *they rebelled against the Lord*, instead of cordially falling in with his Proposal; yea, to doom all their Carcases to fall in the Wilderness. — It is absolutely certain, by the Divine Conduct, that God viewed it, in this Light. — And therefore,

THEY had no Warrant, not one single Soul of them, to believe absolutely, when they left *Egypt*, that they should come to *Canaan*. It is certain, *Moses* understood the Matter thus from *Numb. xxxij. 6—15.* Nor had they any Warrant to believe any farther than this, viz. that if they would cordially fall in with the Divine Proposal, and from their inmost Soul bid an everlasting Farewell to all the Manners and Pleasures of *Egypt*; set their whole Hearts on the holy Land, enlist under the Banner of the God of *Abraham*, cleave to him with all their Hearts, march after him, trust his Wisdom, Sufficiency and Fidelity, to conduct them thither, his Power to overcome all Obstacles, and so courageously march after him into the holy Land; and fight under him against the seven Nations of *Canaan*, and persevere till they had obtained a compleat Victory; then, and in this Way, and in no other, might they expect to come to the Possession of that good Land. — He, therefore, who found within himself, an Heart prepared & disposed to all this, might reasonably expect, to arrive to a Possession of that good Land. Unless some for special and wise Reasons, God should think fit, instead of the earthly, to give him an Inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan*. And therefore, if the wicked Israelites, when they came out of *Egypt*, far, very far, from such a Temper and Disposition, did confidently believe they should come to the promised Land, they had, in Fact, no Warrant for their Belief. Nor did God hold himself obliged, to order Things so, that it should be unto them, according to their Faith; but thought himself, at full Liberty, to lead



lead them into such trying Circumstances, as should effectually discover their Unbelief, Enmity against God, Attatchment to Egypt, low Thoughts of Canaan, all which were consistent with that *appropriating* Belief, they had, when they left Egypt, that they should get to Canaan. And when their Hearts were thus discovered, God held himself at Liberty, notwithstanding any Promise he had made to them, to doom them all to Death.

AND just so it is, in the present Case. The Gospel promises eternal Life, absolutely and unconditionally to no Child of *Adam*: Nor has any Child of *Adam*, any Warrant to believe absolutely and unconditionally, that he shall be saved. — But the Gospel brings the News of the Glories of the heavenly Canaan, where God the Supreme Good, is to be for ever enjoyed, and represents to our View an almighty Saviour and Conductor; invites us to sell all for the Pearl of great Price, from our inmost Soul, bid an eternal Farewell to the Pleasures and Manners of *Egypt*; lay up all our Treasures and Hopes in Heaven, deny ourselves, take up our Cross and follow Christ to the End of our Lives, placing our whole Dependance on the Merits of his Blood, and the Influences of his Spirit; and promises that all such shall finally arrive safe to the heavenly Canaan: But denounces Damnation against all the rest. — He then who is conscious that he has such an Heart in him, may expect to see that good Land. But if any, unconscious of this, firmly believe, they shall assuredly inherit eternal Life, their Faith is absolutely “without any Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason”; just as Mr. *Marshall* says. And they may depend upon it, that God does not hold himself obliged, that *according to their Faith, so shall it be to them*. For if Men will believe Things, which God never promised, he is not obliged to answer their presumptuous Expectations, how much soever they may pervert his Word, to make themselves believe that he is. If they will affirm, that altho’ it is not true before they believe it; yet if they believe it is true, it will become true; still God never said so. God never enjoined this Kind of Faith, nor will he ever Answer the Expectations it begets. THE

THE Israelites could not enter in, *because of Unbelief.*—Spiritual Blindness is the Source of Unbelief, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. They were Blind to the Being and Perfections of God. They did not see, that the God of Abraham was an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being; the supreme, all-sufficient Good, infinitely worthy of supreme Love, and the most entire Confidence, Trust and Dependence. Rather, they entertained a low Idea of God. And hence, when Things looked Dark, and they come to a Pinch, it appeared that they did not think in their Hearts, that he was a Being fit to be believed and trusted.—— And so, they did not think in their Hearts, that if they should venture to take his Word, and march after him to Canaan, that it would end well. *Their Walls were built up to Heaven, and the Sons of Anak were there.* And therefore they were heartily sorry they had ever left Egypt, and wished themselves back again; they magnified the Glory of the Land of Egypt, and spake contemptibly of the Land of Canaan, they blasphemed God, and were on the Point of stoning Caleb and Joshua.—— Thus they could not enter in, *because of Unbelief:* i. e. of their Unbelief of those Things, which were true, whether they believed them or not.— For God was an absolutely perfect Being, fit to be believed and trusted:—— And if they had believed him to be such, and in that Belief, ventured to Trust him, and march after him to Canaan, it would have ended well.—— These Things were true, whether they believed them or no.— And there was sufficient Evidence of their Truth.— And it was this that rendered their Unbelief so Criminal.—— Whereas, had these Things not been true, but false; had they known they were false, they could not have been at all to Blame for their Unbelief. And God never did, & never will blame his Creatures for Unbelief, when he knows, and they know, that there is no Evidence from Scripture, Sense or Reason, that the Things to be believed are true.

Arg. 4. FROM those Words, in Mar. xi. 23, 24. "*Whosoever shall say unto this Mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the Sea, and shall not doubt in his Heart, but shall believe*"

"believe that those Things which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what Things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them — From these Words it is plain," says Mr. Wilson, "that Men may have sufficient Warrant to believe some Things which cannot be said to be infallibly true, whether they believe them or not." p. 27. — To which I Answer, —

1. THAT the Faith, here spoken of, is the *Faith of Miracles*. And it was true before they believed it; that if they were at any Time inspired by immediate Revelation, to declare, that such a particular Miracle should be wrought, it should be done. When therefore the immediate Suggestion of the Divine Spirit came into their Minds, prompting them to declare, that a particular miraculous Event should happen, they had, from that, and from the Promise of Christ, full Evidence to believe that it would be done on their Declaration. And on this Ground, *Peter* had a good Warrant to say, to the lame Man, in Act. iii. *Rise up, and walk*: And full Evidence before he spake, to believe, that on his Speaking, the Man would be healed. And so again, here was nothing like their "strange Kind of Assurance, without any Evidence of the Thing."

2. BUT if any are disposed to understand the Promise in the 24th Verse, in a larger Latitude, to respect all the Prayers of true Saints; *Whatsoever Thing ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*; yet even then, the Words will not prove, that we ought to believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it. — For, it is true before we believe it, that whatsoever we ask the Father, in Christ's Name, agreeable to God's Will, shall be given to us, Mat. vii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Joh. xvi. 23, 24. When therefore any one desires, and is conscious to himself, that he has an Heart to ask the offered Blessings of the Gospel, in the Name of Christ, he cannot but know, if he believes the Gospel to be true, that he shall have them: For he is "constrained to believe it, by the clearest Evidence:" For he has the express Promise of Christ in the Case. — As if I should say

say to my Child, " whenever you want Bread, ask me for  
 " it, and you shall have it. I will never fail in any one  
 " Instance to give it to you. You may therefore come  
 " in the full Assurance of Faith, nothing doubting, but  
 " that you shall receive it. For this I establish as an  
 " invariable Rule, by which I will conduct towards  
 " you, viz. *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find.*  
 " When therefore you want Bread, and have an Heart  
 " to ask it in the Manner you know I would have you,  
 " you may know before you ask, that you shall receive :  
 " And so you may ask, *believing you shall receive, and you*  
 " *shall have it.*" And now again, in all this, there is no-  
 " thing like their " strange Kind of Assurance ;" nothing  
 " like believing " without any Evidence of the Thing,"  
 " and believing " that to be true which is not before we  
 " believe it." For it is true whether we believe it  
 " or not, that whatsoever we ask in Christ's Name shall  
 " be given us. And we have the highest Evidence of the  
 " Thing.----- What it is to ask in Christ's Name, has  
 " been already shewn. (*Essay. Sect. IV, and V.*)

3. In order to make this Text serve the Purpose of  
 supporting their Scheme, it must be understood thus.  
 " O christless, impenitent, unconverted Sinner, who art  
 " in an unpardoned State, under the Wrath and Curse  
 " of God, impenitent as thou art, believe thy Sins are  
 " forgiven, and they shall be forgiven. I do not say as  
 " Peter did, *repent and be converted, that thy Sins may be*  
 " *blotted out.* But I say, impenitent as thou art, and  
 " certain as thou art, of thine impenitency, without any  
 " Evidence of the Thing, from Scripture, Sense or Rea-  
 " son, believe thy Sins are blotted out, and it shall be  
 " unto thee according to thy Faith. For altho' it is  
 " not true before thou believest it, in believing it to be  
 " true, it shall become true. Believe therefore thy Sins  
 " are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven." — This is  
 the Spirit and Soul of that evangelical Preaching in  
 fashion with these Men. See p. 102, 123, 175, &c —  
 But neither that Text in *Mark*, nor any other in the  
 Bible gives the least Countenance to their Scheme.

Thus we have taken a View of the Arguments,  
 which



which Mr. *Wilson* uses, to prove, that in justifying Faith "we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it."—— And thus we have finished what was at first proposed. And his Scheme, in contrast with that of the gross *Antinomians*, stands thus,

GROSS *Antinomianism*, and refined *Antinomianism*, agree in asserting, that in justifying Faith we believe that our Sins are forgiven, and that God is reconciled to us.

GROSS *Antinomians*, assert, (1.) That the Elect are justified before Faith. (2.) That their Justification is manifested to them by the Spirit of God. (3.) In Consequence of which they believe they are justified. (4.) This Belief pacifies their Consciences, and is the Source of every religious Affection.

REFINED *Antinomians*, assert, (1.) That before Faith the Elect, as well as others, are under the Wrath of God and Curse of the Law. (2.) That yet in Faith they believe God loves them, and they are delivered from the Curse of the Law. (3.) And because this is not true before it is believed, therefore they believe it without any Evidence of the Thing. (4.) This Belief pacifies the Conscience, and is the Source of every religious Affection. —— Now,

If the Elect are not justified before Faith, the gross *Antinomian* Scheme is fundamentally false.—— And,

If in justifying Faith, we are not to believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it, the refined *Antinomian* Scheme is also fundamentally false.

THE Fact believed on both Schemes is the same, *viz.* that an impenitent, unconverted, christless Sinner is justified. And a Belief of this Fact, on both Schemes, produces the same Effects, *viz.* pacifies the Conscience, and is the Source of all their Religion. And both Schemes grant that this Fact is not revealed in the Bible. But one vindicates his Belief by saying, the Elect are justified before Faith, and have their Justification immediately revealed to them by the Spirit of God. And the other by saying, we are commanded by God, to believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it, and to believe without any Evidence of the Thing, and  
God

God stands obliged that our Faith shall not be disappointed.

We have heard how the celebrated Mr. *Marshall* explains his Scheme; and we have considered what Mr. *Wilson* has to offer in its Defence. And the Controversy is brought into a narrow Compass, to one single Point. viz. whether in justifying Faith we believe that to be true, which is not true before we believe it. And it is brought down out of the Clouds, and made plain and easy to the weakest Capacity, and every one is freely left to judge for himself.

If after all any poor bewildered Sinner is still at a loss, let him take his Bible in his Hand, enter into his Closet, fall on his Knees, look up to God who has given him the Bible to be the only Rule of his Faith, and say, "O Lord, thou hast given me thy holy Word to be the only Rule of my Faith; and is it safe, great God, for me to venture my Soul for Eternity in the Belief of that, which, all acknowledge, is not revealed in thy holy Word? If every Truth contained in that sacred Book, all which are true before they are believed, join to declare me an unpardoned Sinner; O leave me not to quiet my Conscience by the Belief of that which is not revealed there! O suffer me not to fly from the unerring Word of my final Judge, and take Refuge in a Lie! Rather let me have no Peace, than a false Peace! O lead me out of this bewildered State, and give me an Heart to understand and believe thy holy Word, and make that the only Rule of my Faith, of thine infinite Mercy thro' Jesus Christ." Then let him turn to, read, and well consider the following Texts: *Mat. vii. 21—27. Act. iii. 19. Luk. xiii. 3, 5. Isai. iv. 7. Prov. xxviii. 13. Act. xx. 21. Job. iii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. Luk. iv. 9, 10, 11. 1 Job. ii. 4.*

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